

PINK RIBBON PRESS

Autumn 2020



Join our Pink Bubble!
www.pinkbubble.org.nz

How you're helping support Kiwis during COVID-19 crisis

With the whole country on lockdown due to COVID-19, all of us have been faced with restrictive challenges. Those battling breast cancer have been truly tested.

Being able to access a trusted source of information and reassurance via our website, social media, nurse advice helpline and online patient platform, mybc, has eased people's worries. Take a look inside this issue of Pink Ribbon Press to find out how you've helped your fellow Kiwis at this difficult time.

Meanwhile, the crisis has shone a light on how another innovative Breast Cancer Foundation NZ (BCFNZ) support service - already underway thanks to you, our donors - was ahead of the game.

Late last year, BCFNZ and Midcentral DHB (Palmerston North) partnered to offer Thriving, a support service that's an alternative to outpatient clinic follow-up for low-risk early breast cancer patients who've completed surgery and radiation therapy.

The Thriving service, available to selected early breast cancer patients and those with DCIS, is being managed by BCFNZ nurse Melissa Warren. Patient numbers are steadily growing.

Her oldest patient is an active 90-year-old who volunteers for two days a week at an op shop and is a keen golfer, while the youngest is in her early 40s.

Melissa calls and emails patients at regular intervals - a service that will continue for five years after their primary breast cancer treatment. If they need to, patients can also contact Melissa between scheduled times to discuss any concerns.



Melissa Warren
BCFNZ nurse

Like all hospitals around the country, Palmerston North Hospital is trying to reduce the number of people attending appointments in person at this risky time. Our new service meets that need perfectly. And when COVID-19 is over, not having to attend 15-minute hospital appointments in person will mean less hassle for patients and a freeing-up of outpatient clinic resources to deliver best care to new or high-risk breast cancer patients. "It's a really exciting innovation," Melissa says.

"This new approach considers patients' emotional and psychological as well as physical wellbeing, and it involves whānau, too. The traditional model of follow-up was disease-focused and not helpful for people in moving forward. This puts them more in control." Melissa says.

Melissa texted the patients the day New Zealand went into lockdown, reassuring them that she was just a phone call away during the isolation period. "So this service has been very timely," she says.

She says the aim is for patients to thrive and move forward after breast cancer treatment.

We wouldn't be able to continue running services like this without the amazing generosity of so many Kiwis like you during this challenging time. That's why we've been so grateful for the outpouring of support people have shown through our emergency 'Pink Bubble' campaign, launched in response to the COVID-19 crisis. By making a donation to join our virtual 'Pink Bubble', you can help to make sure everyone affected by breast cancer continues to receive the best possible support. Find out more at www.pinkbubble.org.nz

Join our Pink Bubble!

Help support breast cancer patients
through COVID-19

www.pinkbubble.org.nz

Your support allows our crucial work to carry on

While the world battles the COVID-19 crisis, your support is helping to fight breast cancer in New Zealand.

Heart-breaking headlines have made us all feel sad and vulnerable. At a time like this, it is important to be kind to one another, and reach out and connect to those who need us most.

It's also imperative for Breast Cancer Foundation NZ to continue our work in early detection, ground breaking research and patient support – and we can only do this with your help. We simply cannot risk leaving women vulnerable as they go through breast cancer treatment, or miss opportunities to educate women on the importance of mammograms and self-checking.

That's why our programmes have continued despite the upheaval. Thanks to your amazing support, we have been able to achieve wonderful things.

Our Pink Caravan and its nurse educators kept calm and carried on delivering the breast health message throughout the South Island for as long as they could. Read about the difference they have made on page 5.

Our team of nurses has spent countless hours reassuring and advising worried women via phone and email.

Our webinar programme has continued, providing excellent in-depth advice to people all around New Zealand. We also organised a pop-up webinar featuring medical experts answered questions from our community about COVID-19 and breast cancer.

Our innovative services, such as Thriving (see front page), continue to break new ground. Meanwhile, the investment we are making today in the National Breast Cancer Register means that, in the longer term, patients everywhere in New Zealand will benefit. Find out more on page 4.

We are so grateful for your ongoing support, especially at a time like this. We truly couldn't do it without you.



Evangelia Henderson



Evangelia Henderson CEO

Webinars pull in the viewers

In the last six months, BCFNZ webinars have focused on topics such as breast reconstruction, managing the side effects of treatment, what to expect after a diagnosis and dealing with DCIS. In total, 1016 people have signed up to watch our webinars live over that time and 844 people have watched our webinar videos at a later date.

It's great to hear that people continue to find our webinars helpful, whether they're currently going through treatment or finished a while ago. Our pop-up webinar in late March, featuring radiologist Monica Saini (a member of our medical advisory committee) and BCF nurse Natalie James, was able to answer questions raised by the COVID-19 situation and was well-received.

Our webinar programme will continue this year, with topics including decision-making in advanced breast cancer, and complementary therapies. The April webinar was one of our most requested topics – nutrition during and after treatment. You can check it out at www.breastcancerfoundation.org.nz/webinars



"Thank you so much for the seminar, Adele, Natalie and Monica. It was really interesting and useful."

- Julie

"Excellent job. Very informative."

- Narelle

"Can I take this opportunity to say how much I appreciate these webinars? I watch as a professional, but I am certain that your ladies (and gents) with breast cancer get a lot out of these sessions. Thank you."

- Barbara, radiologist



Nurses provide reassurance during uncertain times

**What questions should I be asking my oncologist? Should I get the flu immunisation this winter?
What are the implications for my elective breast reconstruction surgery?**

People at various stages of breast cancer treatment have been receiving expert, targeted advice from our nurses via our free 0800 phone line and mybc, our online support community.

"Our nurse team has been fielding questions from people wanting to understand any risks associated with treatment so that they can continue focusing on being well," says Nurse Lead Natalie James.

"This is what we do year-round. We love helping our community by offering reassurance and giving them the right, most up-to-date information."

Counselling and physio for recovery are still being funded for breast cancer patients across New Zealand. Both services are being offered using technology such as video calling in order to keep people safely apart.

"It's so important for these services to continue, even at a time like this," says Natalie. "We want to support people to recover quickly and fully."

Meanwhile, to allow our innovative services to keep expanding, the BCF nurse team has grown. In late March we welcomed Judith Beattie to the team.

Judith is an experienced nurse who became interested in cancer care when a friend of hers went through breast cancer. She worked as a cancer pathway coordinator and in breast screening at Counties Manukau before joining BCF. Judith has a passion for teaching. She can't wait to get into the community and share her knowledge.

"I'd woken with a sore throat and, knowing I was immune-compromised, I was worried. But when I spoke to nurse Kathryn, I felt so reassured. She was amazing."

- patient, who is recovering from breast cancer treatment

"It's a lonely feeling once everything's done and dusted. Unfortunately, the fears and trauma remain with you and sometimes you need someone to talk to just for reassurance and a pick-me-up."

- patient



Dear Nurse...

Question: My two-yearly mammogram is due soon. Will I still be able to have it?

Answer: BreastScreen Aotearoa postponed mammograms during the COVID-19 lockdown. BSA contacted women whose appointments were affected and started rebooking mammograms to take place once the lockdown lifted. If your two-yearly mammogram is due soon, BSA should be in touch to let you know the next steps. If you're aged between 45 and 69 and you're not yet enrolled, you can call BSA on 0800 270 200.

Need advice?

Call our breast nurses on
0800 BC NURSE (0800 226 8773)

Email questions to
breastnurse@bcf.org.nz

www.mybc.care
www.breastcancerfoundation.org.nz

We're here to help

Investing in the future – Breast Cancer Foundation National Register

All breast cancer patients, regardless of ethnicity or geographical location, should receive the same high standard of care. Sadly, at the moment, that isn't always the case.

That's why, with donors' help, we are growing our investment in the Breast Cancer Foundation National Register. It's a vital resource to help doctors and researchers improve diagnosis and treatment and reduce inequities in our health system.

Our National Register Manager, Sue Kleinsman, has been hard at work since starting in her role late last year. "So far, half of New Zealand's 20 District Health Boards, representing around 67% of patients, are on board," Sue says. "We aim to have every DHB signed up by December this year."

Northland DHB (based in Whangarei) and Tairawhiti DHB (based in Gisborne) recently joined the National Register, a comprehensive database that holds extensive detail on patients' breast cancer treatment and follows them up for life.

Sue is excited about the register's potential to change lives.

"The breadth and depth of data means that doctors and researchers can have much better insight into what works and what is less successful," says Sue. "The ultimate goal is better, equal treatment for all."

Steve Hudson, a breast surgeon with Tairawhiti DHB, says, "Data is vital; without it we don't know where we can improve on practice."



Sue Kleinsman
National Register Manager, Breast Cancer Foundation NZ



Steve Hudson
Breast surgeon, Tairawhiti DHB



Your help is even more vital during
this COVID-19 crisis

Mr Mrs Miss Ms Other

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

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I would like to make a donation to Breast Cancer Foundation NZ

Please accept my gift of:

\$35 \$75 \$250 Other \$ _____

Credit card: Visa Mastercard Amex

Card number:

Name on card: _____

Expiry date: Signature: _____

Direct bank transfer

12 3030 0534226 07 (One-off donation)

12 3030 0534226 06 (Monthly donation)

Please include your **supporter ID** _____ and **PRP Aut** as a reference. _____

Donate online at www.breastcancerfoundation.org.nz/donate

Please make cheques payable to Breast Cancer Foundation NZ

Please send your donation and this form to:
BCFNZ, Private Bag 99906, Newmarket, Auckland 1149

Thank you for your support



"Until now, I'd never heard of a mammogram" - Pink Caravan spreads the word

BCFNZ's Pink Caravan took to South Island roads over summer, spreading the breast cancer early detection message northwards from Bluff.

Sadly, Pinkie's tour was shortened due to COVID-19. However, it had already made a huge impact.

In Dunedin, one visitor told the caravan nurses, "Until now, I'd never heard of a mammogram." She was 47 years old. Caravan nurses promptly enrolled her in BreastScreen Aotearoa's free screening programme along with two other women – one who'd just turned 45 and another, aged 52, who'd never had a mammogram.

Breast nurse educators took side trips to speak to members of the public and health professionals at GP practices, hospitals

and community events across the South Island. Towns visited included Bluff, Invercargill, Dunedin, Queenstown, Alexandra, Cromwell, Wanaka and Tuatapere.

Pinkie was warmly received everywhere and word spread quickly in smaller communities. A fisherman on a trawler off the south coast heard that Pinkie was in Bluff and called his wife to tell her to drop by – which she did!

Pinkie will resume its South Island tour in Oamaru. You can watch its progress by following posts on our social media. Thanks for your generous support.

Update on petition for free GP visits for advanced breast cancer (ABC) patients:

The petition that many of you signed has been forwarded to the Health Select Committee and we've been asked for a written submission. Watch this space.



Acknowledging Breast Cancer Foundation's corporate partnerships

Over the years, we have been supported by some wonderful New Zealand companies. Many have been with us through thick and thin. Their backing has helped us achieve so much in early detection, innovative research and patient support.

Over the coming months, it would be wonderful if you could be there for our partners, too. As a community, we need to come together, support jobs for Kiwis, and help Kiwi businesses so that they, in turn, can keep helping Kiwis with breast cancer.

We'd like to thank the businesses below, and ask you to support them in return when you can.

Corporate partners



Pink Ribbon Platinum partners



Pink Ribbon Gold partners



In-kind partners



BELL GULLY

POST HASTE

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Campaign partners



TRAFAVGAR



Contact us

Email: info@bcf.org.nz Phone: 0800 902 732

Ask a nurse: 0800 BC NURSE (0800 226 8773)

Post: Breast Cancer Foundation NZ

PO Box 99650, Newmarket, Auckland 1149

www.breastcancerfoundation.org.nz

@pinkribbonNZ